

Letter cites NRLC stance in July calling provisions of original bill "Government-imposed involuntary euthanasia"

Washington, D.C. -Congressman Tim Ryan (OH-17), along with nine other pro-life Democratic Congressional members have asked the National Right to Life Coalition (NRLC) to support overturning the President's veto on the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). The 10 members cited the support of various pro-life organizations including the Catholic Health Association as well as the NRLC's initial opposition to the CHAMP Act, which included the S-CHIP provisions.

"The NRLC opposed the bipartisan S-CHIP bill on the surprising basis that a provision in the legislation that equalized payments between private Medicare plans and traditional Medicare would result in 'government-imposed involuntary euthanasia' of senior citizens," said the Congressional members. "When that provision was eventually eliminated from the final S-CHIP bill, including the support of many pro-life Democrats, we expected the NRLC to join with other pro-life organizations and pro-life members of Congress to support the bill."

"I'm a little astonished that NRLC hasn't come out in support of this bill," said Congressman Tim Ryan. "I can't imagine legislation that affirms life and holds to our shared values as much as covering 10 million children. I am urging the NRLC to rethink its position on this bill and come out strongly in favor of ensuring that our children can live long, productive and healthy lives."

The full text of the letter can be read below:

October 15, 2007

Wanda Franz, Ph.D

President, National Right to Life Committee

National Right to Life Committee
512 10th St. NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Dr. Franz:

As Democratic pro-life Members of Congress, we were disappointed and dismayed when the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) announced in July that it was actively opposing the House-passed reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which would provide health insurance to over 10 million low-income children.

The NRLC opposed the bipartisan SCHIP bill on the surprising basis that a provision in the legislation which equalized payments between private Medicare plans and traditional Medicare would result in "government-imposed involuntary euthanasia" of senior citizens. When that provision was eventually eliminated from the final SCHIP bill, with the support of many pro-life Democrats, we expected the NRLC to join with other pro-life organizations and

pro-life Members of Congress in supporting the bill's passage.

Democratic pro-life Members of Congress are committed to promoting policies that prevent and reduce the number of abortions in America. Nearly 60% of abortions are obtained by women with incomes below 200% of the poverty level, and approximately 73% of women cite "inability to afford a child" as a reason for having an abortion

The reauthorization of the SCHIP program will contribute to reducing the number of abortions performed in the U.S. As such, we believe that ensuring low-income, pregnant women and children have affordable healthcare is a key component to any sound policy approach for reducing the number of abortions in America.

We remain deeply disappointed that the NRLC has not yet come out in support of the SCHIP bill.

As the Catholic Health Association recently stated:

We believe the most important pro-life thing the Congress can do right now is to insure that the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is reauthorized. Children's lives and the lives of unborn babies depend on a strong SCHIP reauthorization.

We hope you will join with us-and 10 million low-income children-in advocating for passage of this important pro-life legislation. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

Tim Ryan

Member of Congress